

(Ret.), former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Gen. Merrill A. “Tony” McPeak, USAF (Ret.), former Air Force Chief of Staff; Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, USAF (Ret.), former National Security Adviser; Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, USA (Ret.), former Army Chief of

Staff; former Secretary of Defense William Perry; and President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea. Senator Kerry also referred to the National Intelligence Estimate and the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Remarks at a Presidential Debate Watch Party in Coral Gables, Florida *September 30, 2004*

The President. Thank you all for being here. Anything worthwhile on TV tonight? [*Laughter*] I enjoyed it. I had a good time up there talking about what I believe. No, it's not hard to debate if you know what's in your heart, know where you want to lead this country.

Listen, I too want to thank the people of this State for their courage, compassion, and decency in the face of incredible suffering. These four hurricanes came to this State, and the people of this State have risen up. And when they found a neighbor in need, they provided compassion and help. When they found somebody who's hurting, they provided succor needed. And I thank the people of this State so very much for setting such a great example for the rest of our country.

There I was, standing there on the stage, and guess who I was looking at the whole time? Laura. If you could see a smile occasionally come across my face, that's because I was looking at a lady I love. Then occasionally I'd glance over and see Barbara and Jenna. I love them too. Oh, yes, I want to thank Jenna and Barbara for working so hard in this campaign. I want to thank Laura for her great compassion and composure.

I want to thank my brother Jeb for being such a great Governor for Florida. I mean, when this State needed him, needed his leadership, he showed up. He'd been every—he's been all over this State, working hard to make sure that those who have

suffered realize that help is around the corner, that we're doing everything we can to protect people.

Listen, I'm honored to be here with the next United States Senator, Mel Martinez. This man needs to be in the United States Senate. He not only had a fantastic past—as a matter of fact, he's a member of Pedro Pan—but he's got a great future, and the people of Florida will benefit by having Mel Martinez in the U.S. Senate. We love Kitty, Kitty Martinez. She's one of our favorites.

I want to thank—before I went out there to debate, I saw two of the preprogram participants—it's kind of hard for a Texan to say—[*laughter*]—preprogram participants. That would be Rudy Giuliani. I want to thank him for being here.

Audience members. Rudy! Rudy! Rudy!

The President. And I want to thank my friend General Tommy Franks for being here as well.

Now, we've got two more campaigns to go—I mean, two more debates to go. No more campaigns except this one, two more debates to go and a lot of hard work. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we're going to carry Florida again.

I was only disappointed in one thing about the debate tonight: There was not one question on Cuba. Let me tell you my question: *Cuba libre*. [*Applause*] *Quatro mas años*. No, people know where I stand. People know what I believe. I've got a plan

to fight these terrorists, to keep this country secure. I've got a plan to spread freedom, not only in the greater Middle East but in our own hemisphere, in places like Cuba. I've got a plan to make this world more peaceful.

I'm looking forward to the debate on domestic policy too. There's some big differences. He's going to run up your taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm going to keep them low. We've got a plan to continue growing this economy, a plan to make sure our children get a good education, a plan to make sure health care works, but a plan that recognizes this: The role of Government is to help people realize their dreams, not to tell people how to live their lives.

Now, I'm honored you all came out. As you know, I'm kind of getting older, so I need to get my sleep. [*Laughter*] We

have come to thank you for your steadfast support. Tomorrow morning, first thing, I'm getting up and heading to Pennsylvania, and then I'm going to New Hampshire. What I'm telling you is, I'm going to keep campaigning as hard as I possibly can, carrying our message of a better tomorrow, and we're going to win in November.

God bless. God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 p.m. at the Coconut Grove Expo Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Kitty Martinez, wife of Florida senatorial candidate Mel R. Martinez; Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.